

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LUSAKA 00151 200535Z

ACTION AF-10

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FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

TO USINFO WASHDC IMMEDIATE

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FOR IOP/M

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SUBJECT: SOMALIA REVEALS DEPTH OF SOVIET/CUBAN INVOLVEMENT IN THE
HORN OF AFRICA

LUSAKA, JANUARY 19 -- MORE REVELATIONS OF RUSSIAN AND CUBAN
INVOLVEMENT IN THE HORN OF AFRICA WERE MADE HERE TODAY BY THE
SOMALIA AMBASSADOR IN ZAMBIA.

AMBASSADOR MICHAEL MARIANO TOLD A NEWS CONFERENCE THAT APART
FROM THE SOVIET UNION AND CUBA, OTHER WARSAW PACT NATIONS SUCH
AS EAST GERMANY, HUNGARY AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA WERE ALSO INVOLVED
IN THE CONFLICT BUT HE NOTED THAT THEY WERE INVOLVED ON A LESSER
SCALE THAN THE SOVIETS AND THE CUBANS.

AMBASSADOR MARIANO ALSO DISPUTED THE FIGURES QUOTED BY
WESTERN INTELLIGENCE SOURCES AS THE ESTIMATED NUMBER OF
RUSSIAN AND CUBAN MILITARY PERSONNEL IN ETHIOPIA.

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PAGE 02 LUSAKA 00151 200535Z

"WE ARE CONVINCED THAT THERE ARE BETWEEN 10,000 AND 15,000
CUBANS INVOLVED," HE SAID.

HE ALSO CLAIMED THAT THERE WERE BETWEEN 2,000 AND 4,000
COMBATANTS FROM SOUTH YEMEN INVOLVED IN THE CONFLICT.

THE SOMALI ENVOY FURTHER ALLEGED THAT THERE ARE EIGHT RUSSIANS AND THREE CUBANS SITTING ON THE ETHIOPIA SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL.

HE DECLARED THAT THE CONFLICT IN THE REGION HAD NOW ESCALATED TO PROPORTION WHERE IT NO LONGER WAS WITHIN THE POWERS OF SOMALIA AND ETHIOPIA TO SOLVE. "IT IS NO LONGER AN AFRICAN PROBLEM. IT IS NO LONGER WITHIN THE POWERS OF SOMALIA AND ETHIOPIA TO SOLVE. IT IS A SUPER POWER PROBLEM," HE DECLARED.

HE ACCUSED THE SOVIET UNION OF BEING SOLELY RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS AND CALLED ON THE UNITED STATES, FRANCE, BRITAIN AND WEST GERMANY TO CHALLENGE THIS "OUTSIDE INVOLVEMENT" BY RUSSIA.

HE SAID HIS GOVERNMENT HAD NOW SENT "AN URGENT APPEAL" TO THE FOUR WESTERN POWERS FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE NOT ONLY OF ARMS BUT MILITARY PERSONNEL AS WELL.

AMBASSADOR MARIANO SAID AMONG THE MILITARY HARDWARE POURING INTO ETHIOPIA VIA A MASSIVE AIRLIFT WERE MISSILES IN THE 500 TO 700 KILOMETRE RANGE, STALIN'S ORGANS AND T64 TANKS. HE SAID MI 23 FIGHTERS AND BOMBERS WERE NOW INVOLVED IN THE FIGHTING.

HE REPEATED HIS GOVERNMENT'S ASSERTION THAT A SEA, AIR AND LAND INVASION OF HIS COUNTRY WAS IMMINENT WITH THE UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 LUSAKA 00151 200535Z

SOVIETS, CUBANS AND OTHER WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES ACTIVELY BACKING IT. ITEM USIS LUSAKA.O'BRIEN

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